

REMARKS

Claims 1-39 are pending in the application. In the non-final Office Action dated March 21, 2007, the Examiner made the following disposition:

- A.) Rejected claims 27-39 under 35 U.S.C. §101.
- B.) Rejected claims 1-39 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Microsoft Excel 2000 ("*Excel 2000*").

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections and address the Examiner's disposition below.

A.) Rejection of claims 27-39 under 35 U.S.C. §101:

Claims 27, 34, and 38 have been amended as per the Examiner's request to overcome the rejection.

Claims 28-33, 35-37, and 39 depend directly or indirectly from claims 27, 34, or 38 and are therefore allowable for at least the same reasons that claims 27, 34, and 38 are allowable.

Applicants respectfully submit the rejection has been overcome and request that it be withdrawn.

B.) Rejection of claims 1-39 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Microsoft Excel 2000 ("*Excel 2000*"):

Applicants respectfully disagree with the rejection.

Claim 1 has been amended to correct an informality.

Independent claims 1, 8, 12, 14, 21, 25, 27, 34, and 38 each claim subject matter relating to determining automatically by a computer whether a reference to a cell conforms to a predetermined syntax for entry of the reference into a formula in another cell. When it is determined that the reference to the cell does not conform to the predetermined syntax for entry

into the formula based on whether the predetermined syntax allows a cell reference in an active portion of the formula, then formula editing is automatically terminated.

This is clearly unlike *Excel 2000*, which fails to disclose or suggest automatically terminating formula editing in a cell when it is determined that a reference to another cell in the formula does not conform to a predetermined syntax. The Examiner argues that two different examples in *Excel 2000* teach or suggest Applicants' claimed invention, namely a first example at pages 1-7 and a second example at pages 21-23. Applicants respectfully disagree.

With respect to the first cited example at *Excel 2000* pages 1-7, the Examiner argues that 1) a user can manually determine whether cell B3 should not be entered into cell C1's formula, and then manually depress the "X" box to cancel the action and revert back to a prior formula in cell C1. This is clearly unlike Applicants' claimed invention in which a computer automatically determines whether a reference to another cell conforms to a predetermined syntax and then automatically terminates formula editing. Thus, *Excel 2000* pages 1-7 clearly fails to disclose or suggest Applicants' claimed invention.

With respect to the second cited example at *Excel 2000* pages 21-23, *Excel 2000* page 22 clearly shows that a formula has been entered into cell C1 that includes a reference to both cells A1 and B1. Thus, contrary to the Examiner's assertion, *Excel 2000* does not automatically determine whether a reference to another cell conforms to a predetermined syntax and then automatically terminates formula editing. In fact, as clearly shown on *Excel 2000* page 22, formula editing continues to take place.

The Examiner alleges that *Excel 2000* automatically terminates editing of cell C1, but this is not correct. Applicants have performed the same example using *Excel 2000* software and the software does not terminate formula editing. Instead, after the formula (=MOD(A1, B1)) has

been entered and the return button has been entered (manually terminating formula entry and submitting the formula), then Excel 2000 attempts to perform the calculation in cell C1. As Excel 2000 cannot perform the calculation, due to the division by zero error, Excel 2000 outputs the error message #DIV/0! into cell C1. Accordingly, *Excel 2000* does not automatically terminate formula entry, but instead allows the formula and the reference to cell B1 to be entered fully, and then later merely shows that the formula calculation result produces an error. Nowhere does *Excel 2000* teach or suggest automatically terminating formula entry. *Excel 2000* page 22 clearly shown that *Excel 2000* allows formula entry to continue regardless of which references are being entered into a cell's formula. Applicants confirmed this by testing the Examiner's examples.

Therefore, *Excel 2000* fails to disclose or suggest claims 1, 8, 12, 14, 21, 25, 27, 34, and 38.

Claims depend directly or indirectly from claims 1, 8, 12, 14, 21, 25, 27, 34, or 38 and are therefore allowable for at least the same reasons that claims 1, 8, 12, 14, 21, 25, 27, 34, and 38 are allowable.

Applicants respectfully submit the rejection has been overcome and request that it be withdrawn.

Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants submit that all claims are allowable over the cited prior art, and respectfully requests early and favorable notification to that effect.

Respectfully submitted,

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